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BOX PATENT APPLICATION
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Re: Application of Tatsuya SESHIMO, Takahiro NAKA, Satoshi SHINADA,
Yukihiro UCHIYAMA
INK JET RECORDING APPARATUS
Our Ref. Q61335

Dear Sir:

Attached hereto is a continuation application of PCT application No. PCT/JP00/00821, filed February 15, 2000 including 42 sheets of the specification, claims, 13 sheet(s) of informal drawings, 4 sheets of drawing legends, Information Disclosure Statement and PTO Form 1449 with references. The executed Declaration and Power of Attorney and Assignment will be submitted at a later date.

The Government filing fee is calculated as follows:

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|----------|
| Total claims | 20 - 20 | = | | x | \$18.00 | = | \$0.00 |
| Independent claims | 10 - 3 | = | 7 | x | \$80.00 | = | \$560.00 |
| Base Fee | | | | | | | \$710.00 |
| Multiple Dependent Claim Fee | | | | | | | \$270.00 |

TOTAL FEE

\$1540.00

A check for the statutory filing fee of \$1540.00 is attached. You are also directed and authorized to charge or credit any difference or overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 and any petitions for extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 which may be required during the entire pendency of the application to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. A duplicate copy of this transmittal letter is attached.

Priority is claimed from February 15, 1999, February 15, 1999, May 21, 1999, May 27, 1999, and September 10, 1999, based on JP Application Nos. P.Hei. 11-036116, P.Hei. 11-036117, P.Hei. 11-140924, P.Hei. 11-147456, and P.Hei. 11-256752 respectively. The priority document(s) will be filed at a later date.

Since the due date for entering the National Stage for filing a continuation of the PCT Application fell on a Sunday, the filing of this application on Monday, October 16, 2000, is sufficient to obtain the benefit of the filing date of the PCT application.

Respectfully submitted,
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upgrading the print quality. The recording head drive method is also improved to be suitable for the ink characteristics even in a case where ink is unchanged. Further, the maintenance conditions, such as idle ejection cycle and forcible ejection in a capped state, are improved to prevent clogging in nozzle openings.

The results of such improvements can be reflected on a recording apparatus on the user side by storing data in semiconductor means attached to an ink cartridge, as disclosed in JP-A-5-193127.

With such ink cartridge, optimum print can be realized by changing the ink type not only for different models of the recording apparatuses but also for the same recording apparatus in order to meet print quality improvement of the recording apparatus side and various needs. However, there is a disadvantage in that a mistake easily occurs in selection of ink corresponding to the print purpose, and printed material having the intended quality cannot be obtained.

Thus, as disclosed in JP-A-8-310007, a recording apparatus is proposed, in which an ink cartridge is provided with storage means attached thereto that stores identification data indicative of the type of the ink cartridge, and comparison data for determining whether or not each ink cartridge is compatible is stored in the recording apparatus. When an ink cartridge is mounted to the recording apparatus, it is

determined based on the data in the storage means as to whether or not the ink cartridge is compatible to the recording apparatus. If the ink cartridge is not compatible, the subsequent operation is inhibited to await replacement of the ink cartridge with a compatible ink cartridge.

The recording apparatus can be operated in the optimum state, but if a compatible ink cartridge is not in hand, printing is completely impossible. This is inconvenient in a case where urgent printing is required.

Further, if the data in the storage means attached to the ink cartridge is lost or cannot be read, printing is impossible.

It is, therefore, a first object of the invention to provide a recording apparatus which, even if an incompatible cartridge is mounted, informs the user of the compatibility of the mounted cartridge based on the data stored in storage means attached to the ink cartridge, and enables the printing on user's own authority.

It is a second object of the invention to provide a recording apparatus which, if data can be read from storage means attached to an ink cartridge, can create prints with high quality based on the data, and which enables printing even if data cannot be read.

Disclosure of the Invention

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The invention is directed to an ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for receiving supply of ink from an ink cartridge provided with storage means storing data for determining compatibility to recording apparatuses, and control means for determining compatibility of ink based on the data in the storage means and executing print operation. In the ink jet recording apparatus, if compatibility of an ink cartridge cannot be confirmed when the ink cartridge is mounted, a caution is given as well as input of a continuation instruction from a user is awaited to execute a subsequent operation.

Thus, if compatibility of the ink cartridge cannot be confirmed, the subsequent operation, such as filling the recording head with ink, can be executed based on confirmation by the user, and therefore it is possible to eliminate damage on the recording head due to improper ink filling, and avoid waste print sheets. Even in a case where the compatibility cannot be confirmed due to trouble of the recording apparatus side, a forcible transition to the print operation can be realized, and user's complaint can be solved.

The present disclosure relates to the subject matter contained in Japanese patent application Nos.:

Hei. 11-36116 (filed on February 15, 1999);

Hei. 11-36117 (filed on February 15, 1999);

Hei. 11-140924 (filed on May 21, 1999);

Hei. 11-147456 (filed on May 27, 1999); and
Hei. 11-256752 (filed on September 10, 1999),
which are expressly incorporated herein by reference in
their entireties.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a block diagram to show a first embodiment of an ink jet recording apparatus of the invention. FIG. 2 is a drawing to show one embodiment of an ink cartridge. FIG. 3 is a flowchart to show the operation of the recording apparatus. FIG. 4 is a flowchart to show another operation of the recording apparatus.

FIG. 5 is a block diagram to show a second embodiment of an ink jet recording apparatus of the invention. FIG. 6 is a flowchart to show the operation of the recording apparatus.

FIG. 7 is a block diagram to show a third embodiment of an ink jet recording apparatus of the invention. FIG. 8 is a schematic drawing to show one embodiment of setup range storage means of the recording apparatus. FIG. 9 is a flowchart to show the determination operation of the recording apparatus. FIG. 10 is a drawing to show a format applied when ink information stored in storage means is normal and a format applied when ink information is abnormal.

FIG. 11 is a block diagram to show a fourth embodiment

of the invention. FIGS. 12 and 13 are flowcharts to show the operation of the recording apparatus. FIG. 14 is a flowchart to show the operation for determining compatibility of ink cartridge in association with media by the recording apparatus.

Best Mode for Carrying out the Invention

The invention will be discussed in detail based on embodiments shown in the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 shows one embodiment of an ink jet recording apparatus of the invention. A recording head 3 is provided to the opposed side to record paper, of a carriage 2 reciprocated by a drive motor 1. An ink cartridge 4 for supplying ink to the recording head 3 is mounted detachably on the upper surface of the carriage 2.

Storage means 7 connected to electrodes 6 contactable with an external contact 5 is mounted to the ink cartridge 4 as shown in FIG. 2. It stores control data, etc., for driving the recording apparatus in optimum conditions in addition to

- (1) ID data for identifying ink cartridge
- (2) manufacturing year/month/day
- (3) expiration date
- (4) data specifying compatible recording apparatuses
- (5) ink capacity, etc.

Referring again to FIG. 1, print control means 10 is

provided with reference data storage means 11 storing data of ink compatible to the recording apparatus, and compares the data stored in the reference data storage means 11 with the data read from the ink cartridge 4 to determine whether or not print can be executed. If compatible, the print control means 10 controls head drive means 12 under predetermined drive conditions to executing the print operation. If compatibility cannot be confirmed, the print control means 10 displays a caution on a panel 13 and a display of a host.

Next, the operation of the recording apparatus thus configured will be discussed based on a flowchart shown in FIG. 3.

When an ink cartridge replacement instruction is issued from an ink cartridge replacement switch 14 on the panel 13 or the host, the print control means 10 moves the carriage 4 to an ink cartridge replacement position.

In this state, if the ink cartridge 4 is mounted (step S1), the print control means 10 reads control data from the storage means 7 of the ink cartridge 4 through data read means 16, and determines whether or not data compatible to the recording apparatus is included (step S2). If compatible, the print control means 10 starts a sequence for filling the recording head 3 with ink to fill the recording head 3 with ink (step S3), and a printable state is established (step S4). If a print instruction is input in this state (step S5), the

print operation is continued (step S6).

On the other hand, if compatibility to the recording apparatus cannot be confirmed (step S2), the print control means 10 generates an indication for prompting the user to replace or again confirm the ink cartridge on the panel 13 or the display of the host (step S7), and awaits a print continuation instruction to be input from a continuation instruction switch 15 on the panel (step S8) or an ink cartridge replacement instruction to be entered by the ink cartridge replacement switch 14 (step S9) for a predetermined time (step S10). If no operation is performed within the predetermined time, the subsequent operation is inhibited.

On the other hand, if the user's confirmation is given based on the caution, so that the print continuation instruction is output from the continuation instruction switch 15 on the panel 13 or the host within the predetermined time (step S8), then the recording head 3 is filled with ink in the mounted ink cartridge 4 (step S11) and printing is enabled (step S12). A print instruction is input (step S13), and printing is started (step S14), and when an amount of print appropriate for replacing the ink cartridge 4, for example, one-page print, is complete (step S15), the program returns to step (S7) to generate the indication for prompting the user to replace or again confirm the ink cartridge on the display of the panel 13 or the host, thereby preventing trouble caused by printing

cannot be confirmed. Therefore, the recording head can be protected from the damage caused due to filling with improper ink, and waste print sheets can be prevented. Further, if the compatibility cannot be confirmed because of trouble of the recording apparatus side, a forcible transition to the print operation can be made and user's complaint can be solved.

(Second embodiment)

FIG. 5 shows a second embodiment of an ink jet recording apparatus of the invention. Print control means 20 is accessible to update data storage means 21 storing data read from storage means 7 of an ink cartridge configured as described above, and default data storage means 22 storing default data for enabling the record operation to such an extent that printing can be executed regardless of whether or not data in the storage means 7 of the ink cartridge exists. The print control means 20 controls head drive means 12 based on either one of these data.

Next, the operation of the recording apparatus thus configured will be discussed based on a flowchart shown in FIG. 6.

When an ink cartridge 4 is mounted (step S1), the print control means 20 reads control data from the storage means 7 of the ink cartridge 4 through data read means 16, and determines whether or not data compatible to the recording apparatus is included (step S2). If compatible, the print

control means 20 reads the data, and updates the data in the update data storage means 21 (step S3), and a printable state is established (step S4).

On one hand, if the data is incompatible to the recording apparatus or the data cannot be read, the print control means 20 produces an indication for prompting the user to replace the ink cartridge (step S5). If the ink cartridge is replaced based on the indication (S6), the program returns to step (S2) and the above-described steps are repeated.

On the other hand, if a new cartridge is not in hand and a instruction for printing with previous update data is given by an external switch 13 (step S7), the print control means 20 reads data stored in the update data storage means 21, provided that the data exists in the update data storage means 21, and a printable state is thus established (step S8).

If data does not exist in the update data storage means 21, the print control means 20 reads data from the default data storage means 22, and a printable state is established (step S9).

Thus, if data cannot be read from the storage means 7 although the ink cartridge is proper, the default data enables printing with reasonable quality. If the previous update data is stored, normal printing can be executed, provided that ink in the cartridge is compatible to the recording apparatus.

According to the embodiment, the recording apparatus

includes the default data storage means storing the default data for controlling the recording head, and the print control means, which, when an ink cartridge is mounted, reads data from the storage means of the ink cartridge to determine compatibility, which controls the ink jet recording head based on the data in the storage means of the ink cartridge if compatible, and which executes the print operation based on the data in the default data storage means if incompatible. Therefore, in a case where data cannot be read from the semiconductor storage means of the ink cartridge although the ink cartridge is proper, the default data enables printing with reasonable quality and user's complaint can be solved.

(Second embodiment)

FIG. 7 shows the main part for determining soundness of data in storage means attached to an ink cartridge.

A control mechanism 30 of a recording apparatus is constructed mainly of a microcomputer 31, a memory 32 for storing a control program and data, a drive control section 33 for controlling the print operation, and an interface 34 for receiving print data from a host device not shown.

It also includes optimum drive condition storage means 35 storing an optimum drive condition for a proper ink cartridge guaranteed for use with the recording apparatus, and general-purpose drive condition storage means 36 storing a general-purpose drive condition for making it possible to

carry out print with safety even, for any other ink cartridge than proper ink cartridges.

In the embodiment, the optimum drive condition storage means 35 includes a color correction table storage section 35a, a head drive condition storage section 35b storing the data defining a setup value of applied voltage for ejection, and a paper feed condition storage section 35c storing the data defining the transport time of paper for changing the time required for drying ink after print. Normally, the drive control section 33 is set to an optimum quality mode through a mode selection section 37 based on information from the optimum drive condition storage means 35 so that print data is printed in the optimum quality mode.

The general-purpose drive condition storage means 36 includes a head drive condition storage section 36a storing a print-possible condition with safety and with high quality as much as possible if any ink cartridge other than proper ink cartridges is mounted, in the embodiment, the data of applied voltage capable of reliably ejecting ink droplets even if the viscosity of ink is high, and a paper feed condition storage section 36b storing the data defining the prolonged transport time of paper so as to provide the time for making it possible to reliably dry the record medium after print even with ink having low drying speed.

The optimum quality mode based on the optimum drive

condition from the optimum drive condition storage means 35 and the general-purpose quality mode based on the general-purpose drive condition from the general-purpose drive condition storage means 36 are changed through the mode selection section 37 for output to the drive control section 33, which then executes print in the selected quality mode

In the embodiment, setup range storage means 39 is provided as means for checking data read by a data read section 40 from storage means 7.

The setup range storage means 39 stores normal setup range data for comparison, indicative of the range of values that ink information in the storage means 7 should fall within if the ink information in the storage means 7 is sound data without being destroyed. A determination section 41 compares one or more or all attention information pieces of the read ink information with the normal setup range data, and if the attention information is within the normal setup range, the determination section 41 determines that the optimum drive condition from the optimum drive condition storage means 35 is to be used for printing, and if the attention information is out of the normal setup range, the determination section 41 determines that the general-purpose drive condition from the general-purpose drive condition storage means 36 is to be used for printing.

The ink information stored in the storage means 7 of an

ink cartridge 4 has a data format fixed. The ink information in the storage means 7 is read serially, and the contents of the series of the information is checked sequentially from the beginning of the information. At the time, if a value that cannot exist originally is detected, it is determined that the storage contents of the storage means 7 are destroyed, and the print operation is executed in the preset general-purpose quality mode.

That is, the data item order and the number of assigned bytes are fixed, and when the ink information is read out by the recording apparatus side, the data values of the ink information are checked, whereby whether or not the data contents of the ink information are destroyed is checked. The determination section 41 compares all ink information read from the storage means 7 with the normal setup range data, and if the ink information falls within the normal setup range, the determination section 41 determines that the optimum drive condition is to be used for printing, and if even one piece of the ink information is out of the normal setup range, the determination section 41 determines that the general-purpose drive condition is to be used for printing.

FIG. 8 schematically shows one embodiment of the setup range storage means 39. The items in a data table correspond to plural types of information concerning ink (ink information) stored in the storage means 7. The eight items

magenta, cyan), monochrome multi-gradation, six colors of pale YMC family, or six colors of orange green color family, and an optimum color correction table is selected correspondingly to the color configuration. At the time, if an erroneous color correction table is used, good image quality cannot be obtained. The "ink type" and the "coloring matter" are particularly important elements among the essential technical information for the reasons described above.

The manufacturing year, month, and day and the attachment year, month, and day are considered as the essential technical information because printing with high quality can be executed by driving the head in association with time-related change of ink (viscosity is raised or color is changed because of degradation of degassed rate, thermal precipitation of foreign substance, or any other deterioration).

In the embodiment, four bits are assigned to the ink type assuming ten and several types, eight bits are assigned to the coloring matter considering the flexibility of setting, four bits are assigned to year for indication of low-order one digit of year, and four bits and eight bits are assigned to month and day respectively; however, if any other value is adopted as the number of bits, no problem is involved.

In the embodiment, the additional information includes data indicating the cartridge type of the destination, content amount, etc., of the cartridge (eight bits), information

indicating the mode of the optimum ink sequence (eight bits), ink remaining amount (142 bits), and information indicating the manufacturing line (four bits). The reason why the number of bits assigned to the ink remaining amount is large is that it is necessary to set multiple stages from a no-ink state to an ink-full state.

In FIG. 9, the determination section 41 compares ink information (m types) read serially from the storage means 7 by the data read section 40 with the normal setup range data in sequence through a format filter (steps S1 to S3). That is, check is started at the $N=1^{\text{st}}$ ink information, and if the ink information lies within the normal setup range stored in the normal setup range storage means 39, the program passes through steps (S4) and (6), increments N by one ($N=N+1$), and then returns to step (S3), so that the second ink information is checked in a similar manner. This process is repeated, and if all compared ink information (m types) lies within the normal setup range stored in the normal setup range storage means 39, it is determined that the state is the normal state in which the contents of the storage means 7 are not destroyed, and when N is identical to m ($N=m$) (step S6), the determination result is output to the mode selection section 37 for printing using the optimum drive conditions from the optimum drive condition storage means 35 (step S7).

However, if even one piece of all compared ink

information (m types) is found to be out of the normal setup range in the check at step (S4), it is determined that the contents of the storage means 7 are destroyed by static electricity, etc., and printing is executed using the above-mentioned general-purpose drive conditions (step S5). However, printing can also be executed using the above-mentioned general-purpose drive conditions only if the data about specific attention information, for example, the items of the ink type and the color information is out of the normal setup range.

The determination method will be further discussed based on FIG. 10. FIG. 10 (I) shows the case where ink information in the format is "normal." It is assumed that the cartridge with ink type data No.10 and color identification data No. 3B was manufactured on April 1, 1997, and attached to the recording apparatus on July 15, 1998.

FIG. 10(II) shows an "abnormal state" in which the ink information is destroyed or changed by overwriting due to the effect of static electricity, etc. That is, the contents of the first four bits (representation portion of 1997) in the portion representing manufacture date of April 1, 1997 are changed from original "7" to "F." Further, the contents of the manufacturing day represented on the third and fourth four bits are also changed from original "01" to "00." The data at locations where ink type data No.10 and color identification

data No. 3B should occur is changed from original "10" and "3B" to "11" and "3F." Their normal setup ranges are "0 to 9" for the manufacturing year and "01 to 31" for the manufacturing day. For the ink type, "11" as well as "10" in "0 to F" is contained in the setup range, and for the color information, "3F" as well as "3B" in "00 to FF" is contained in the setup range.

First, the microcomputer 31 reads ink information serially from the storage means 7 of the cartridge 4, and checks the first item (manufacturing year) to see if the ink information lies within the normal setup range. The manufacturing year is changed from original "7" to "F", and "F" exceeds the normal setup range of the upper limit value to the lower limit value, "0 to 9," thus the determination section 41 determines that the data in the storage means 7 is destroyed because of static electricity, etc., as it is 'out of range'. Accordingly, printing is executed using the general-purpose drive conditions.

If determination control is performed, there is no problem. However, for example, assuming that the manufacturing year data and the manufacturing day data fall within the setup ranges in FIG. 10, even if the overwriting as shown in Fig. 10 is contained in the ink type data and the color information data, the overwriting of the data (which is also data destruction) cannot be detected at all.

Even in such a case, if the additional information shown in FIG. 8 (Nos. 9 to 12) are stored in the storage means 7, the additional information parts are also affected by the fact that the ink type and the color information are destroyed or overwritten, thus the possibility that they will be out of the setup range is very high.

In other words, it can be found to be a very rare case that only the ink type and the color information will be replaced and destroyed and any other information will not be destroyed at all although there is the cause of data destruction. Therefore, it is made possible to estimate occurrence of data destruction as mentioned above that cannot apparently be detected on the ink type or the color information, on the basis of destruction of the additional information. In such a case, change can be made to the general-purpose drive conditions for executing print in reliable drive conditions.

Alternatively, the general-purpose mode is set so that it is executed only when checking all ink information is complete, and if the number or the ratio of the ink information pieces whose values do not fall within the normal setup range among all ink information (m types) exceeds a given value, print may be executed using the general-purpose drive conditions.

It is desirable to change the print conditions so that the increase degree of ink droplet ejection output and the lowering degree of the paper feed rate are made larger as the

number or ratio of the pieces whose values do not fall within the normal setup range among a plurality of ink information pieces (m types) is increased, namely, to change the print conditions at multiple stages in accordance with the degree of incompatibility.

As described above, according to the embodiment, printable drive conditions can be selected for printing even in a case where the ink information stored in the storage means is destroyed or a case where an ink cartridge, which is not originally provided with storage means and thus the compatibility of which cannot be confirmed, is mounted.

(Fourth embodiment)

By the way, ink is improved for still more improvement of the print quality, and plural types of ink cartridges are to be prepared for the same recording apparatus. That is, the ink jet recording apparatus can also print with high quality on a display film and coated paper as well as ordinary paper by exchanging ink, but options of ink cartridges and media are increased and it becomes difficult for an unfamiliar user to buy the target product properly; this is a problem.

FIG. 11 shows an embodiment of an ink jet recording apparatus, to deal with such a problem. When an incompatible ink cartridge is mounted, the recording apparatus can prevent a recording head from being filled with incompatible ink as much as possible and assist the user in selecting a proper ink

cartridge to prompt the mounting of the compatible ink cartridge. When an ink cartridge incompatible to a record medium is mounted, the recording apparatus can assist, prior to the filling of the recording head with incompatible ink, the user to appropriately select an ink cartridge and a medium that are suitable for the user's print form among various ink cartridges. In this manner, the recording apparatus enables printing in the optimum state.

In FIG. 11, a CPU 30, RAM 31, and ROM 32 make up a microcomputer which is connected via an interface 33 to a host 50. The RAM 31 functions as work memory of the CPU 30, and has an area for temporarily storing data read by read/write means 34 from storage means 7 of an ink cartridge 4, and the ROM 32 stores a control program.

The recording apparatus thus configured outputs a drive signal to a recording head 3 by head drive means 35 based on print data from the host 50 for ejecting ink droplets, and when an operation instruction of ink droplet ejection recovery is given by operating a cleaning instruction switch 41, etc., provided on an operation panel 40 of the recording apparatus, the recording apparatus causes pump drive means 36 to actuate a pump unit 37 for forcibly discharging ink from the recording head 3. The amounts of ink used for the printing and cleaning are calculated by the microcomputer, and stored in the ROM 32.

Media type determination means 38 determines the type

of print medium, namely, ordinary paper, film, or coated paper based on a signal from a sensor 39, and outputs the determination result to the CPU 30. Such medium determination can be easily made by detecting a reflection rate of the record medium or previously printing data specifying the type of medium in a non-print area on the back or at a corner of the medium in a sensor-readable format.

In the figure, numeral 60 denotes power shutdown means for supplying power until termination processing of the recording apparatus is completed subsequently to the operation of a power switch on the operation panel 40, and then shutting down the commercial power supply.

Next, the operation of the recording apparatus thus configured will be discussed based on a flowchart shown in FIG. 12.

As known, the recording apparatus is connected to the host 50 by a cable, and is controlled by driver software previously installed in the host 50 for driving the recording apparatus.

In this state, to replace the ink cartridge 4, the driver software is started, an ink cartridge replacement menu is displayed, and an ink cartridge replacement instruction is given or a cartridge replacement instruction switch 43 on the operation panel 40 is operated.

Thus, a replacement instruction signal is output and the

replaced (step S6).

The indicated data may be the model name or the type name of the ink cartridge, and further if the packing design, the model name, and the type name of the compatible ink cartridge are displayed in association with each print purpose, appropriate information can be provided for the user. The contact addresses and telephone numbers of the dealers of the ink cartridges can also be displayed as required. Thus, even an unfamiliar user can reference the display when buying an ink cartridge, and can surely buy a compatible product without buying any erroneous ink cartridge.

A caution is thus given before the recording head 3 is filled with ink of the ink cartridge 4 mounted. Ink different in type can be prevented from flowing into the recording head 3 to destroying the recording head 3 and degrade the print quality.

If the ink cartridge 4 is replaced without operating a continuation instruction switch 44 (step S8), the program jumps to the above-described step (S2) to conduct the above-described determination.

On the other hand, if the continuation instruction switch 44 on the operation panel 40 is pressed though such a caution is given (step S7), the carriage 2 is moved to the filling position (step S3) and the recording head 3 is sealed with the capping unit 61, then the ink filling operation is performed

in a similar manner to that when the compatible ink cartridge 4 is mounted (step S4).

If a predetermined time has elapsed (step S9) without replacing the ink cartridge 4 after the caution is given at step (S5), information useful for specifying a compatible ink cartridge, such as design put on a package of the ink cartridge 4 compatible to the recording apparatus and further the current record medium, is displayed on the display 51 of the host 50 (step S10). Thus, even an unfamiliar user can reference this display when buying an ink cartridge, and can surely buy a compatible product without buying any erroneous ink cartridge as the ink cartridge 4.

In this manner, a printable state is established (step S11), and when a print instruction is input from the host 50 (step S12), the microcomputer 30 drives the recording head 3 by the head drive means 35 to eject ink droplets, thereby executing the print operation (step S13).

The ink consumed by the printing is managed by counting the drive signals output from the head drive means 35.

If the ink droplet ejection capability is lowered during the print operation, etc., the carriage 2 is moved, the recording head is sealed with the capping unit 61, and the pump unit 37 is actuated for forcibly discharging ink from the recording head 3 to eliminate clogging in nozzle openings, and concurrently, the amount of ink discharged at this operation

is managed as the drive time of the pump unit 37, etc.

When the ink consumption amount after the attachment of the ink cartridge 4 is reduced to the near end, namely, down to the ink amount just before the recording head 3 becomes empty of ink (step S14), a signal is output to the host 50 for displaying the ink end on the display 51 of the host 50 to prompt the user to replace the ink cartridge. If the near end caution is overlooked and ink is consumed entirely, the printing is forcibly stopped and an indication of requesting the user to replace the ink cartridge is displayed.

At the same time, useful information for specifying a compatible ink cartridge, such as design put on the package of the ink cartridge compatible to the recording apparatus, is displayed on the display 51 of the host 50 (step S10). Thus, even an unfamiliar user can reference the display when buying an ink cartridge and can surely buy a fitted product without buying any erroneous ink cartridge.

When a power off instruction is given by operating the power switch 42 (step S15), the data in the RAM 31 concerning the ink cartridge is saved in the ROM 32, and upon completion of termination processing, the power is shut down (step S16).

In the above-described embodiment, when the ink cartridge 4 becomes the near end or the ink end (step S14), the design and the type name of the compatible product are displayed (step S10). As shown in FIG. 13, when the ink

cartridge 4 becomes the near end or the ink end (step S14), whether or not the currently mounted ink cartridge 4 is compatible is determined (step S17), and if it is a compatible product, the design of the current mounted, compatible ink cartridge is displayed similarly to the above-described embodiment, and if not a compatible product, a list of the type names and the model names of a plurality of ink cartridges compatible to the recording apparatus is displayed (step S19), and the operation of the power switch 42 is awaited (step S15).

As described above, if a compatible product is mounted, selection of the ink cartridge that can ensure the same print quality continuously is facilitated. If an incompatible product is mounted, a list is displayed, indicating the type names and the model names of a plurality of ink cartridges compatible to the recording apparatus in order to propose all ink cartridges compatible to the recording apparatus to the user, and assist the user to select an ink cartridge appropriate for the user's needs.

By the way, the print quality of the printed matter provided by the ink jet recording apparatus depends largely on the state of blur and penetration of ink droplets on the record medium surface, thus a record medium is selected in accordance with the purpose and use of print, and further ink optimum for each record medium is provided. Thus, the user unfamiliar with handling is hard to determine whether or not

a record medium and an ink cartridge are compatible to each other.

FIG. 14 is a flowchart to show one embodiment which also determines whether or not a record medium and an ink cartridge are compatible to each other in order to assist the user in buying the ink cartridge and the record medium optimum for the user.

When the ink cartridge 4 is replaced (step S1), data is read from the storage means 7 of the ink cartridge 4 through the read/write means 34 and whether or not the data is compatible to the recording apparatus is determined (step S2). If the ink cartridge is compatible to the recording apparatus, the media type determination means 38 determines the type of record medium (step S3). If the mounted ink cartridge 4 is compatible to the record medium (step S4), the carriage 2 is moved and the recording head 3 is sealed with the capping unit 61 (step S5) and the pump unit 37 is operated for filling the recording head 3 with ink (step S6).

On the other hand, if compatibility of the ink cartridge to the recording apparatus or the record medium cannot be confirmed, the microcomputer 30 displays a caution for prompting the user to confirm the ink cartridge 4 and a list indicating compatible combinations of record papers and ink cartridges (step S7), and moves the carriage 2 to a position at which the ink cartridge 4 can be replaced (step S8). The

data to be displayed may be not only the list, but also the packing designs of the ink cartridges and record papers. The data of the optimum combinations of the ink cartridges and record media is stored in the storage means 7 of the ink cartridge or the ROM 32.

If the ink cartridge 4 is replaced without operating the continuation instruction switch 44 (step S10), the program jumps to the above-described step (S2) to execute the above-described determination operation.

On the other hand, if the continuation instruction switch 44 on the operation panel 40 is pressed through such a caution is given (step S9), the carriage 2 is moved to the filling position (step S5) and the ink filling operation is performed in a similar manner to that performed when a compatible ink cartridge 4 is mounted (step S6).

If a predetermined time has elapsed (step S11) without replacing the ink cartridge 4 after the caution is given at step (S7), the indication similar to that at the above-described step (S7) is displayed (step S12) for the assisting purpose in order to prevent erroneous purchase of an incompatible combination of record medium and ink cartridge.

As described above, a printable state is established (step S13), and when a print instruction is input (step S14), the print operation is executed (step S15).

When the ink amount consumed after the attachment of the

ink cartridge 4 reaches the near end or the ink end, a signal is output to the host 50 to prompt the user to replace the ink cartridge, and concurrently, to display useful information for specifying a compatible ink cartridge, such as design put on the package of the ink cartridge compatible to the recording apparatus (step S17). Thus, the user can surely buy an ink cartridge compatible to the record medium.

When a power off instruction is given by operating the power switch 42 (step S18), the data in the RAM 31 concerning the ink cartridge 4 is saved in the ROM 32, and upon completion of termination processing, the power is shut down (step S19).

According to the embodiment, an ink cartridge compatible to not only the recording apparatus but also the record medium to be printed by the recording apparatus can be bought without error.

In the above-described embodiment, the media determination means 38 detects the type of record medium based on the signal from the sensor 39, but it is clear that similar advantages are provided if the medium type is selected or specified by a switch on the recording apparatus or the host.

In the above-described embodiment, information on compatible ink cartridges and media is displayed on the display 51 connected to the host 50 and the display of the recording apparatus, but the information can also be printed out as a hard copy just before the ink end is reached as required.

As described above, according to the embodiment, if an ink cartridge whose compatibility to the recording apparatus cannot be confirmed is mounted, print is enabled, but the packing designs, etc., of the compatible products can be displayed on the display before the ink head is filled with ink. This prevents trouble caused by filling with incompatible ink as much as possible and assists an unfamiliar user to purchase an optimum ink cartridge. The user can mount a proper ink cartridge to the recording apparatus to operate the recording apparatus with full performance intended thereto.

The four embodiments have been described by taking the recording apparatus of the type in which an ink cartridge is mounted on the carriage as an example, but it is clear that similar advantages are obtained if the invention is applied to a recording apparatus in which an ink cartridge is housed in a cabinet and ink therein is supplied to a recording head of a carriage through an ink supply tube.

Industrial Applicability

As described above, the recording apparatus of the invention enables printing as much as possible in a state in which compatibility of the ink cartridge cannot be confirmed. This eliminates user's inconvenience, and positively assists the user to prevent damage of the recording apparatus and

operate the recording apparatus with the performance intended thereto.

Claims:

1. An ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for receiving supply of ink from an ink cartridge provided with storage means storing data for determining compatibility of a recording apparatus, and control means for determining compatibility of ink based on the data in the storage means and executing print operation, wherein

if compatibility to an ink cartridge cannot be confirmed when the ink cartridge is mounted, the recording apparatus generates a caution and awaits input of a continuation instruction by a user to execute a subsequent operation.

2. The ink jet recording apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the caution is generated each time a predetermined amount is printed.

3. The ink jet recording apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein if a cartridge replacement instruction is entered after the compatibility is confirmed, the ink cartridge is moved to an ink cartridge replacement position.

4. An ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for receiving supply of ink from an ink cartridge provided with storage means storing data, and control means for driving the recording head based on the data in the storage means, the recording apparatus further comprising:

default data storage means storing default data for controlling the recording head; and

print control means, which reads the data from the storage means of the ink cartridge to determine compatibility when the ink cartridge is mounted, which, if compatible, controls the ink jet recording head based on the data in the storage means of the ink cartridge, and which, if incompatible, executes print operation based on the data in the default data storage means.

5. The ink jet recording apparatus as claimed in claim 4, further comprising rewritable update data storage means, wherein the print control means is provided, which reads the data from the storage means of the ink cartridge to determine the compatibility when the ink cartridge is mounted, which, if compatible, updates data in the update data storage means based on the data in the storage means of the ink cartridge and controls the ink jet recording head based on the data in the storage means of the ink cartridge, and which, if incompatible, executes the print operation based on the data in the update data storage means or the data in the default data storage means.

6. An ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for receiving supply of ink from an ink cartridge provided with storage means storing data for determining compatibility to a recording apparatus, and control means for determining compatibility of ink based on the data in the storage means and executing print operation, comprising

optimum drive condition storage means storing an optimum drive condition for an ink cartridge, compatibility of which can be confirmed;

setup range storage means storing normal setup range data for comparison, concerning ink information in the storage element;

general-purpose drive condition storage means storing a general-purpose drive condition for making it possible to reliably print even with an ink cartridge, compatibility of which cannot be confirmed; and

a determination section which compares attention ink information read from the storage element with the normal setup range data, which executes printing using the optimum drive condition if the ink information is within the normal setup range, and which executes printing using the general-purpose drive condition if the ink information contains information out of the normal setup range.

7. The ink jet recording apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein the general-purpose drive condition is set such that pressure for ejecting an ink droplet from the recording head is set larger than the optimum drive condition and that the record paper feed speed is set lower than the optimum drive condition.

8. The ink jet recording apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein a plurality of the general-purpose drive conditions

are provided so that reliable printing can be executed in association with the number or ratio of incompatible pieces of the attention ink information read from the storage element with respect to the normal setup range data.

9. An ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for receiving supply of ink from an ink cartridge provided with storage means storing data for determining compatibility to a recording apparatus, and control means for determining compatibility of ink based on the data in the storage means and executing print operation, wherein

when the recording head is to be filled with ink after an ink cartridge is mounted, the control means determines compatibility of the ink cartridge based on the data from the storage means, and outputs data used as a guide for determining a compatible ink cartridge if the compatibility cannot be confirmed.

10. The ink jet recording apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein the compatibility is compatibility to the recording apparatus.

11. An ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for receiving supply of ink from an ink cartridge provided with storage means storing data for determining compatibility to a recording apparatus, and control means for determining compatibility of ink based on the data in the storage means and executing print operation, wherein

if compatibility of the ink cartridge cannot be confirmed, the control means outputs data used as a guide for determining a compatible ink cartridge.

12. The ink jet recording apparatus as claimed in claim 11, further comprising means for determining a record medium loaded to the recording apparatus.

13. The ink jet recording apparatus as claimed in claim 11 or 12, wherein the compatibility is compatibility to the recording apparatus and record medium.

14. The ink jet recording apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein the control means determines the compatibility of the mounted ink cartridge based on the data from the storage means when the mounted ink cartridge is to be replaced, and the control means outputs data for specifying the mounted ink cartridge if it is the compatible is found.

15. A method of determining compatibility of ink based on data stored in storage means of an ink cartridge for supplying ink to a recording head of an ink jet recording apparatus, the method comprising the steps of:

generating a caution if compatibility to an ink cartridge cannot be confirmed when the ink cartridge is mounted; and

awaiting input of a continuation instruction by a user to execute a subsequent operation.

16. A method of controlling an ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for receiving supply of

ink from an ink cartridge provided with storage means storing data, comprising the steps of:

reading data from the storage means of the ink cartridge to determine compatibility of the ink cartridge when the ink cartridge is mounted to the recording apparatus;

controlling the ink jet recording head based on the data in the storage means of the ink cartridge if the ink cartridge is compatible; and

executing print operation based on data stored in default data storage means if the ink cartridge is incompatible.

17. A method of controlling an ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for receiving supply of ink from an ink cartridge provided with storage means storing data for determining compatibility to a recording apparatus, the method comprising the steps of:

comparing attention ink information read from the storage means with normal setup range data;

executing print operation using optimum drive condition if the ink information is within the normal setup range; and

executing print operation using general-purpose drive condition if the ink information contains information out of the normal setup range.

18. A method of controlling an ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head for receiving supply of ink from an ink cartridge provided with storage means storing

data for determining compatibility to a recording apparatus,
the method comprising the steps of:

determining compatibility of the ink cartridge based on
the data from the storage means when the recording head is to
be filled with ink after the ink cartridge is mounted; and

outputting data used as a guide for determining a
compatible ink cartridge if the compatibility cannot be
confirmed.

19. A method of assisting a user to determine a compatible
cartridge, the method comprising the steps of:

checking data of a first ink cartridge to determine
compatibility of the first ink cartridge;

outputting data used as a guide for determining a
compatible, second ink cartridge if compatibility of the first
ink cartridge cannot be confirmed.

Abstract

In an ink jet recording apparatus comprising an ink jet recording head 3 for receiving supply of ink from an ink cartridge 4 provided with storage means 7 storing data for determining compatibility to a recording apparatus, and print control means 10 for determining compatibility of ink based on the data in the storage means 7 and executing the print operation, when an ink cartridge 4 is mounted, if compatibility to the ink cartridge 4 cannot be confirmed, a caution is given and the recording apparatus awaits an input of a continuation instruction by a user to execute a subsequent operation. Even if a cartridge whose compatibility cannot be confirmed is mounted, printing is enabled as much as possible without incurring damage to the recording apparatus.

09688187-101600

Fig. 1
第1図

FIG. 1

- 10 PRINT CONTROL MEANS
- 11 REFERENCE DATA STORAGE MEANS
- 12 HEAD DRIVE MEANS
- 16 DATA READ MEANS
- A. TO HOST

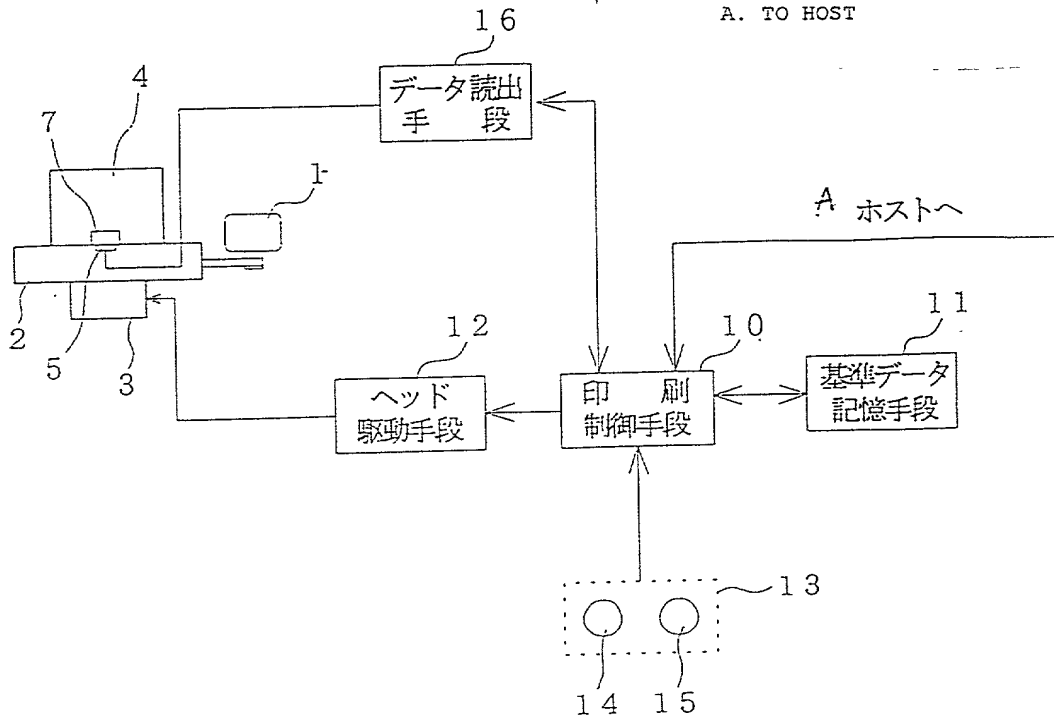


Fig. 2
第2図

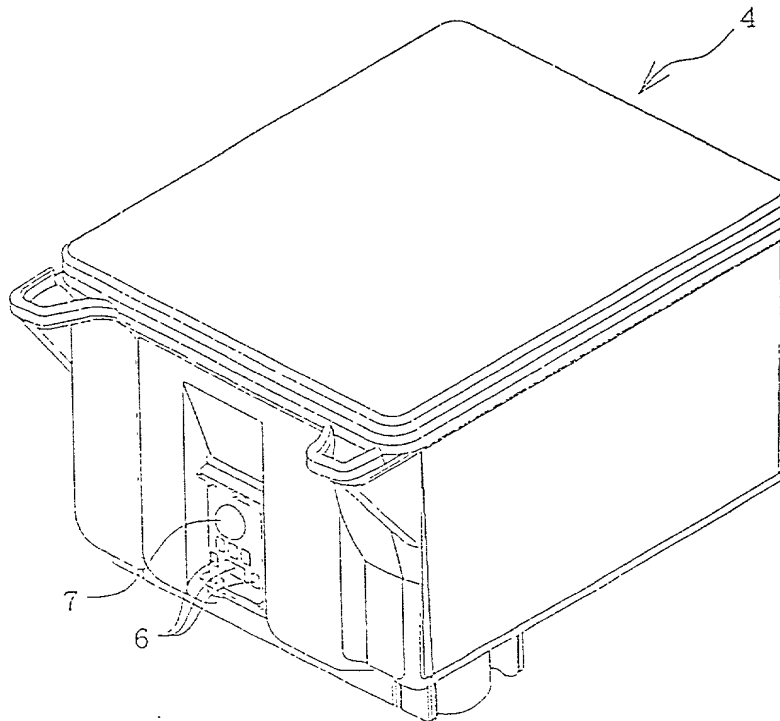


FIG. 3

START

S1 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S2 COMPATIBLE TO THE RECORDING APPARATUS

S3 PERFORM INK FILLING OPERATION

S4 PRINTABLE

S5 PRINT INSTRUCTION INPUT

S6 PRINT OPERATION

S7 CAUTION

S8 INPUT CONTINUATION INSTRUCTION

S9 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S10 PREDETERMINED TIME ELAPSED

S11 INK FILLING OPERATION

S12 PRINTABLE

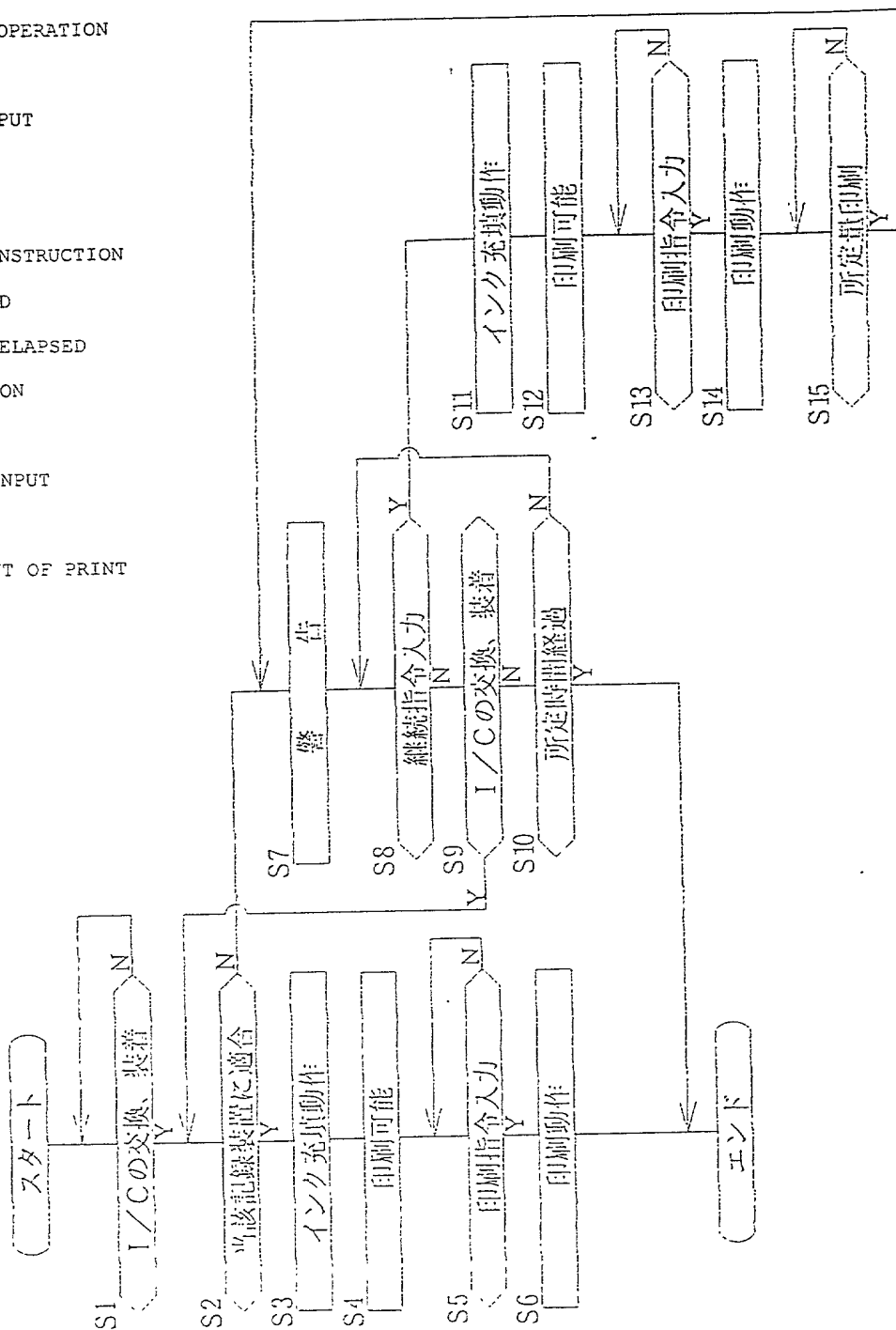
S13 PRINT INSTRUCTION INPUT

S14 PRINT OPERATION

S15 PREDETERMINED AMOUNT OF PRINT

END

第3図 Fig. 3



第4圖 Fig 4

S1 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S2 COMPATIBLE TO THE RECORDING APPARATUS

S3 INK FILLING OPERATION

S4 PRINTABLE

S5 PRINT INSTRUCTION INPUT

S6 PRINT OPERATION

S7 CAUTION

S8 INPUT CONTINUATION INSTRUCTION

S9 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S10 PREDETERMINED TIME ELAPSED

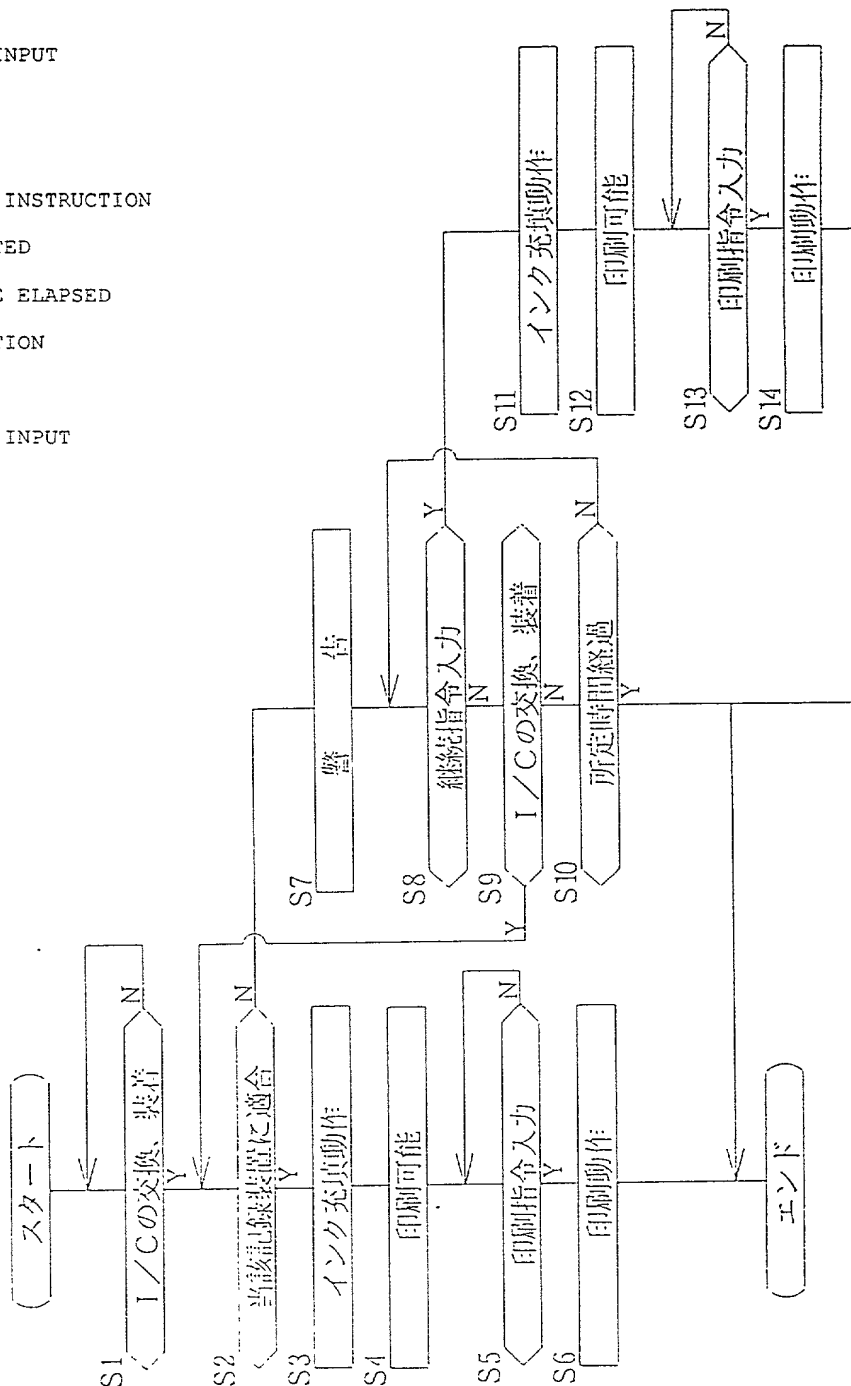
S11 INK FILLING OPERATION

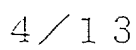
S12 PRINTABLE

§13 PRINT INSTRUCTION INPUT

SL4 PRINT OPERATION

END





A. TO HOST

A. TO HOST

FIG. 6

第6図 Fig. 6

START

S1 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S2 COMPATIBLE TO THE RECORDING APPARATUS

S3 READ DATA AND UPDATE DATA

S4 PRINTABLE

S5 DISPLAY CANNOT BE USED

S6 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S7 PREVIOUS UPDATE DATA SELECTED

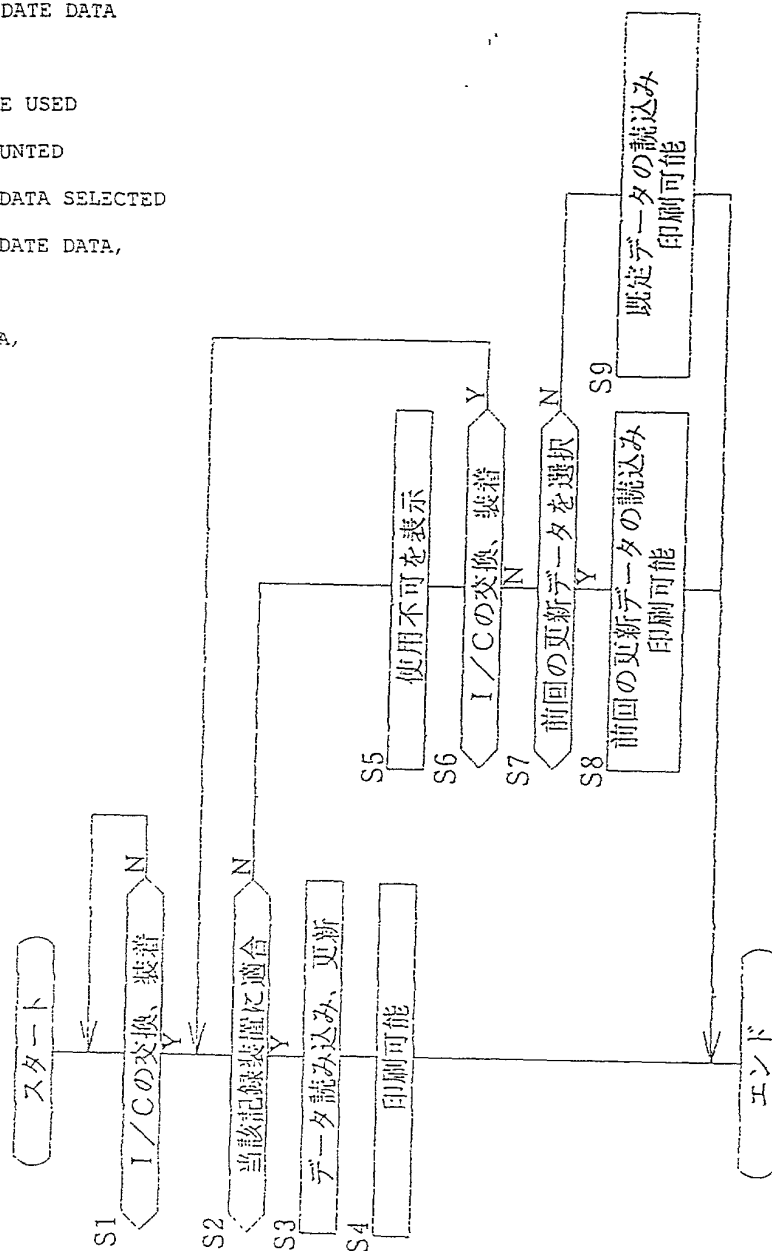
S8 READ PREVIOUS UPDATE DATA,

PRINTABLE

S9 READ DEFAULT DATA,

PRINTABLE

END



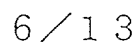


FIG. 7

- 32 MEMORY
- 33 DRIVE CONTROL SECTION
- 35 OPTIMUM DRIVE CONDITION STORAGE SECTION
- 35A COLOR CORRECTION TABLE (STORAGE SECTION)
- 35B HEAD DRIVE CONDITION (STORAGE SECTION)
- 35C PAPER FEED CONDITION (STORAGE SECTION)
- 36 GENERAL-PURPOSE DRIVE CONDITION STORAGE SECTION
- 36A HEAD DRIVE CONDITION (STORAGE SECTION)
- 36B PAPER FEED CONDITION (STORAGE SECTION)
- 37 MODE SELECTION SECTION
- 39 NORMAL SETUP RANGE STORAGE SECTION
- 40 DATA READ SECTION
- 41 DETERMINATION SECTION

記憶情報テーブル

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | 製造年 (下1桁、4) | ...0000~1001 (0~9) |
| 2 | 製造月 (下2桁、4) | ...0001~1100 (1~12) |
| 3 | 製造日 (下2桁、8) | ...0000 0001~0011 0001 (01~31) |
| 4 | 取付年 (下1桁、4) | ...0000~1001 (0~9) |
| 5 | 取付月 (下2桁、4) | ...0001~1100 (1~12) |
| 6 | 取付日 (下2桁、8) | ...0000 0001~0011 0001 (01~31) |
| 7 | インクの種類 (4) | ...0000~1111 (0~F) |
| 8 | 色情報 (8) | ...0000 0000~1111 1111 (00~FF) |
| 9 | カートリッジの仕向先や、内容量といったカートリッジ種類を示すデータ (8) | |
| 10 | 最適なインクシケンスのモードを示す情報 (8) | |
| 11 | インク残量 (142) | |
| 12 | 製造ラインを示す情報 (4) | |

Figure 1. The structure of the *hsp70* gene. The exons are numbered 1 to 5. The introns are numbered 1 to 4. The size of the exons and introns is indicated in base pairs (bp). The size of the entire gene is 1.1 kb.

```

1  MANUFACTURING YEAR (LOW-ORDER ONE DIGIT, 4)
2  MANUFACTURING MONTH (LOW-ORDER TWO DIGITS, 4)
3  MANUFACTURING DAY (LOW-ORDER TWO DIGITS, 8)
4  ATTACHMENT YEAR (LOW-ORDER ONE DIGIT, 4)
5  ATTACHMENT MONTH (LOW-ORDER TWO DIGITS, 4)
6  ATTACHMENT DAY (LOW-ORDER TWO DIGITS, 8)
7  INK TYPE (4)
8  COLOR INFORMATION (8)
9  DATA INDICATING CARTRIDGE TYPE OF DESTINATION, CONTENT
   AMOUNT, ETC., OF THE CARTRIDGE (8)
10 INFORMATION INDICATING MODE OF OPTIMUM INK SEQUENCE (8)
11 INK REMAINING AMOUNT (142)
12 INFORMATION INDICATING THE MANUFACTURING LINE (4)

```

COPIES SET

S1 READ INFORMATION OF CARTRIDGE

S2 N=1

S3 CHECK N-TH DATA

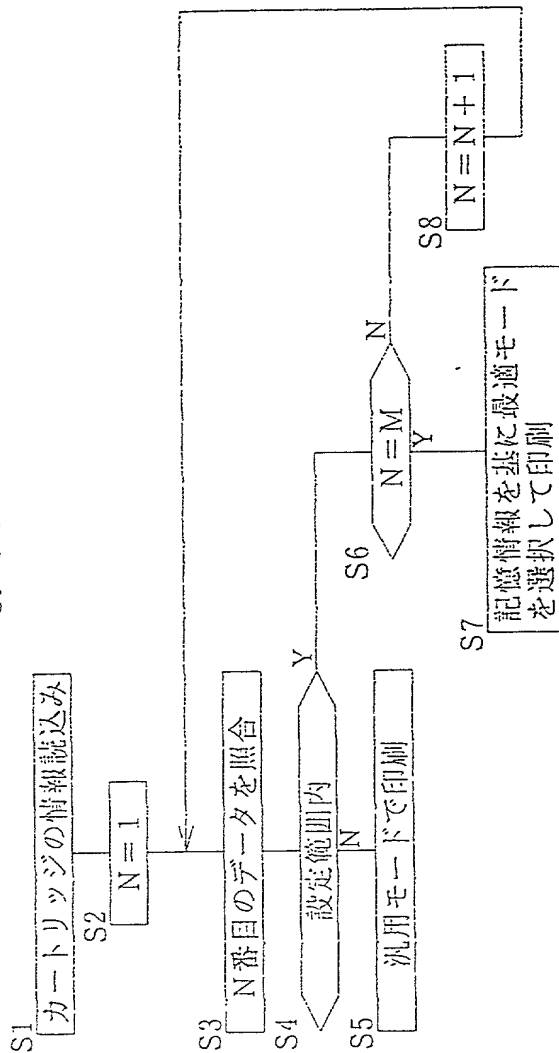
S4 WITHIN SETUP RANGE

S5 PRINT IN GENERAL-PURPOSE MODE

S6 N=M

S7 SELECT OPTIMUM MODE BASED ON STORAGE INFORMATION AND PRINT

S8 N=N+1



第9図 Fig. 9

[illegible]

MANUFACTURED ON 4.1, 1997, ATTACHED ON 2.15, 1998

INK TYPE NO. 10 COLOR NO. 3B

II <ABNORMAL>

OUT OF RANGE OF 0-9 OUT OF RANGE OF 01-31

CHANGE TO VALUE OTHER THAN NO. 10. HOWEVER, WITHIN

RANGE

CHANGE TO NO. 3F. HOWEVER, WITHIN RANGE

I <正常>

| (7) | (4) | (0) | (1) | (10) | (3) | (B) |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| 0 1 1 1 | 0 1 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 1 | 1 0 1 0 | 0 0 1 1 | 1 1 0 1 1 |

1997 4 1 製造 1998 2 15 取付

インク種NO. 10 色NO. 3B

1997. 4. 1 製造, 1998. 2. 15 取付

9/13

△ 漢 字 △

1

0～9の範囲外

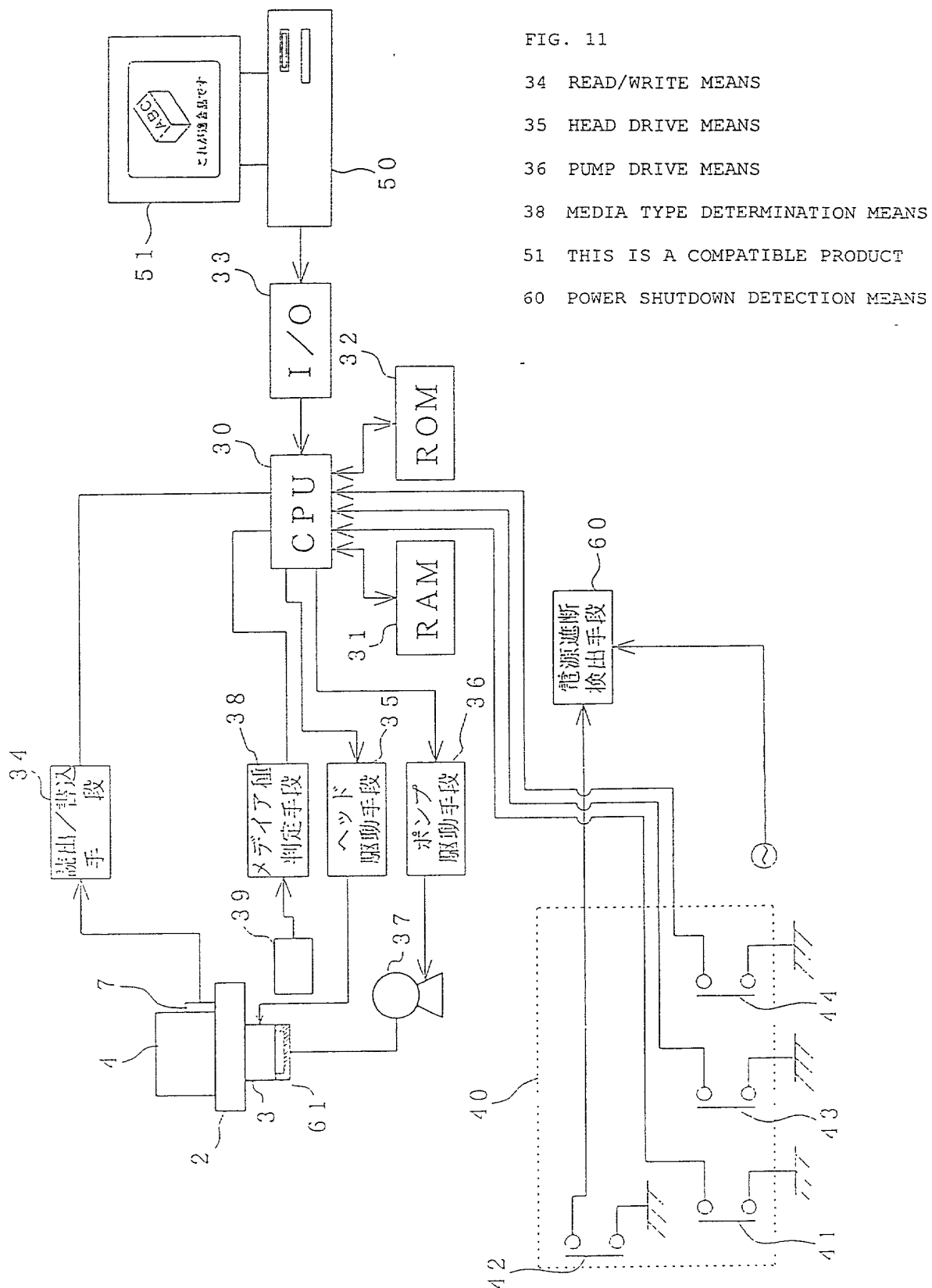
01~31の範囲外

(11)

$$\mathbb{E}$$

NO. 10以外の値に変化してしまっている。
ただし、範囲内

NO. 3 Fに変化してしまっている。
ただし、範囲内



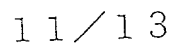


FIG. 12

START

S1 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S2 COMPATIBLE TO THE RECORDING APPARATUS

S3 MOVE TO FILLING POSITION

S4 INK FILLING OPERATION

S5 CAUTION

DISPLAY DESIGN OF COMPATIBLE PRODUCT

S6 MOVE TO I/C REPLACEMENT POSITION

S7 CONTINUATION INSTRUCTION INPUT

S8 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S9 PREDETERMINED TIME ELAPSED

S10 DISPLAY DESIGN OF COMPATIBLE PRODUCT

S11 PRINTABLE

S12 PRINT INSTRUCTION INPUT

S13 PRINT OPERATION

S14 NEAR END

S15 POWER SWITCH OPERATED

S16 TURN OFF POWER

END

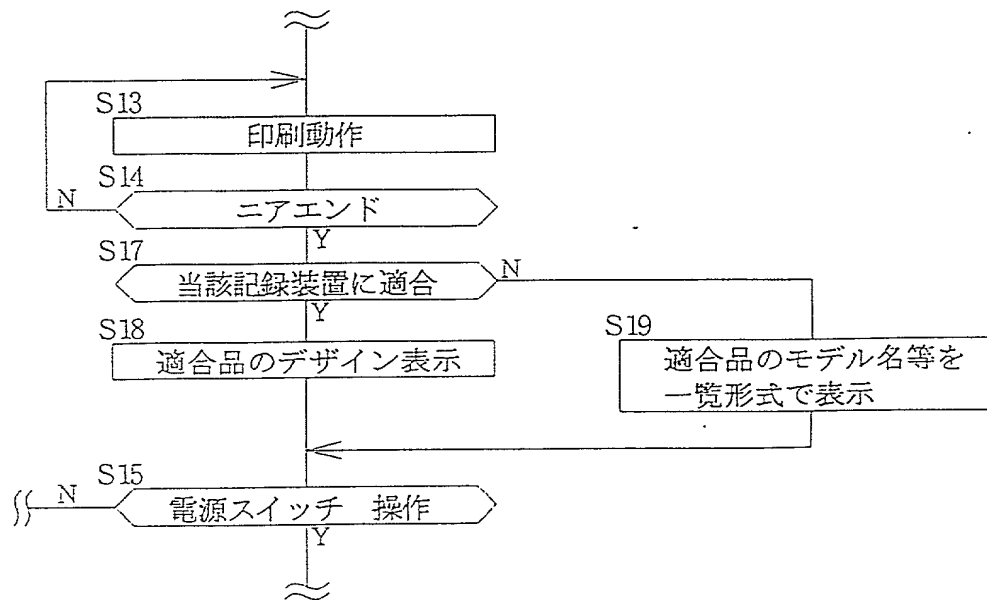


FIG. 13

S13 PRINT OPERATION

S14 NEAR END

S17 COMPATIBLE TO THE RECORDING APPARATUS

S18 DISPLAY DESIGN OF COMPATIBLE PRODUCT

S19 LIST MODEL NAMES, ETC., OF COMPATIBLE PRODUCTS

S15 POWER SWITCH OPERATED

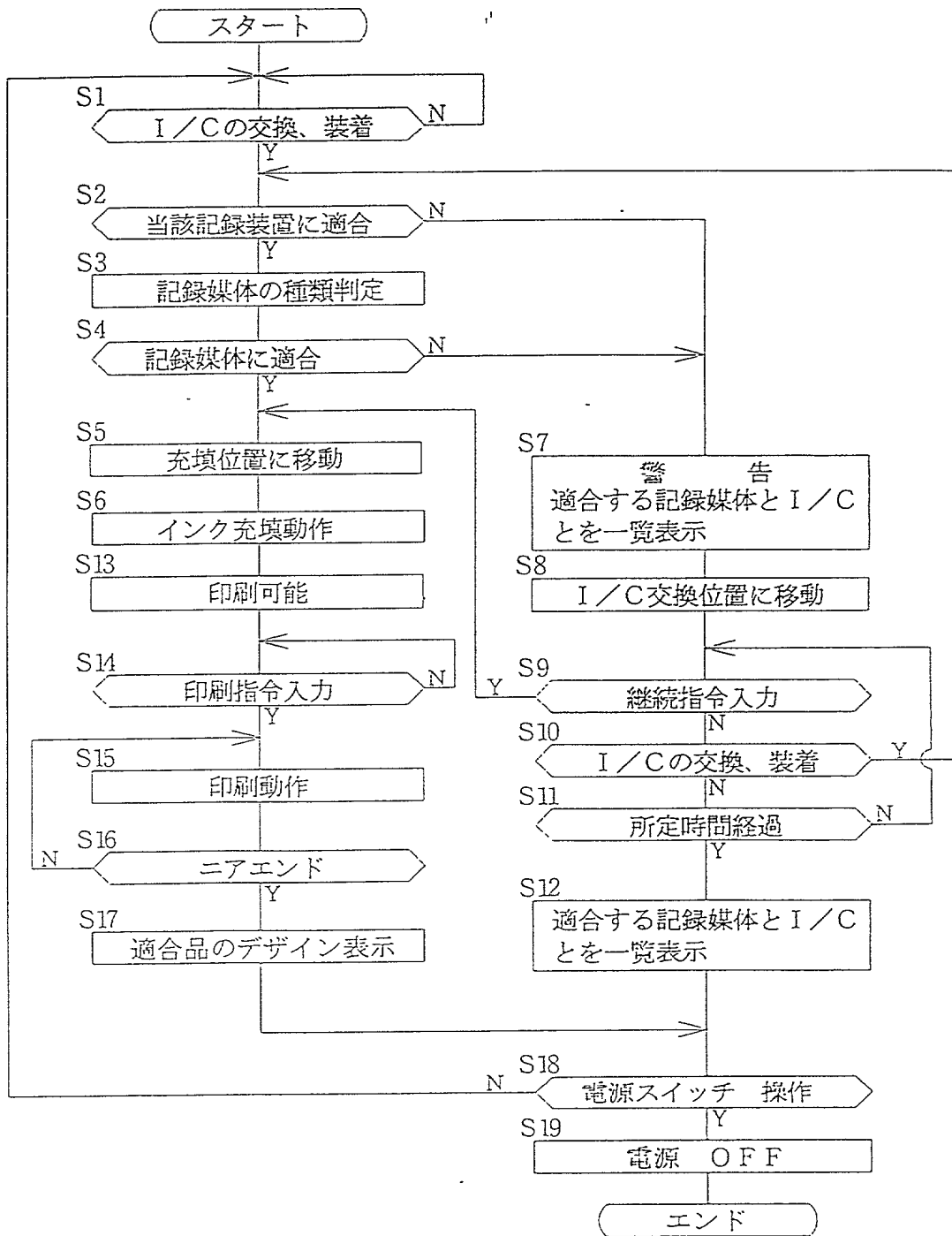


FIG. 14

START

S1 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S2 COMPATIBLE TO THE RECORDING APPARATUS

S3 DETERMINE TYPE OF RECORD MEDIUM

S4 COMPATIBLE TO RECORD MEDIUM

S5 MOVE TO FILLING POSITION

S6 PERFORM INK FILLING OPERATION

S7 CAUTION

LIST COMPATIBLE RECORD MEDIA AND I/C

S8 MOVE TO I/C REPLACEMENT POSITION

S9 CONTINUATION INSTRUCTION INPUT

S10 I/C REPLACED, MOUNTED

S11 PREDETERMINED TIME ELAPSED

S12 LIST COMPATIBLE RECORD MEDIA AND I/C

S13 PRINTABLE

S14 PRINT INSTRUCTION INPUT

S15 PRINT OPERATION

S16 NEAR END

S17 DISPLAY DESIGN OF COMPATIBLE PRODUCT

S18 POWER SWITCH OPERATED

S19 TURN OFF POWER

END